The Mariner's Manual.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

BEVERLY,

ON LORD'S DAY,

March 4th, 1804.

By ABIEL ABBOT,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN BEVERLY.

SALEM:

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1804.

TO THE SEAFARING MEN OF HIS PARISH,

FOR WHOSE BENEFIT THIS DISCOURSE WAS DESIGNED, AND AT WHOSE GENERAL REQUEST IT IS PRINTED, IT IS NOW DEDICATED BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR.

A

SERMON.

PSALM cvii. 23, 24.

They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

THIS beautiful and affecting pſalm ſeems particularly deſigned to ſhow the efficacy of prayer, and a devout regard to God; and that they, who thus wait upon him in ſincerity, whatever be their ſtraits and difficulties, find him a preſent help in time of need. The ſacred writer inſtances in "travellers in the deſert, who have loſt their way, "priſoners, ſick people, mariners, huſbandmen, "even whole countries, who, he ſhows, are made "ſtrangely proſperous, if they have a regard to "God; and, on the other ſide, fall into great mi-"ſery, if they neglect him."* The deſcription of each claſs of men, adduced to illuſtrate the general remark, is very pointed and affecting, and is cloſed with this earneſt exhortation: *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.*

We have ſelected a paſſage from the mariner's portion in this pſalm, to give occaſion to a particular addreſs to a conſiderable number in this aſſembly, who may ſoon leave us, to *do buſineſs on the mighty*

* Patric.

mighty waters. Several circumſtances render this occaſion a ſolemn one. It is a parting with ſouls, committed to my charge, for a ſeaſon, and perhaps *forever.* Leaving us, they will be removed from the reach of admonition, which will be conſtantly repeated to thoſe who remain. They will ceaſe to have the enjoyment of many of the means of grace, and may alſo fall into ſpecial temptations to forget God and the great concerns of religion. The regular return of ſabbath privileges, of temple worſhip, of ſocial praiſe, of miniſterial inſtruction, and holy ordinances, will be interrupted. Add to this, they are departing into dangers, from which they may never return. Theſe circumſtances being juſtly affecting both to them and their paſtor, I hope they will attend to this addreſs with great ſeriouſneſs, and will indulge me with being very particular and earneſt in thoſe counſels, with which I propoſe to make up the greater part of this diſcourſe.

Let the text lead us,

I. To conſider thoſe *works and wonders of God,* which ſeafaring men conſtantly behold *in the deep.*

We will then endeavour,

II. To apply the ſubject to them, ſuitably to their employment and ſituation.

I. Let us conſider thoſe *works and wonders of God in the deep,* which ſeafaring men conſtantly behold.

1. *The works of God in the deep.*

Says the Pſalmiſt, *The ſea is the Lord's, and he made it.* It is a world of wonders; who can look upon

upon it without admiration bordering on terror? When it diſplays to our eyes an unruffled boſom, and is like a boundleſs ſheet of glaſs, reflecting the image of heaven, the azure ſky and ſun by day, and the moon and ſtars by night, what an auguſt ſpectacle do we contemplate! Behold it, at another time, tempeſt-toſt, when *God commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.* See yonder diſtreſſed veſſel; *they mount up to heaven; they go down to the depths; their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble.* How ſublime and terrific is the world of waters in this dreadful commotion! *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!*

Theſe are views of the ocean, often preſented to the mariner, which the dulleſt ſpectator cannot behold unintereſted. Yet the ſurface, however varied by calm or ſtorm, ſhows not half ſo many wonders, as lie beneath it. A ſhort diſcourſe cannot admit many things on this inexhauſtible ſubject; I will mention a few, which ſhould engage the thoughtful and pious, while they move upon the face of the deep.

We perceive, when we expoſe water for any time to the ſun and air, that it ſoon loſes its ſalutary qualities, becomes offenſive, and is even peſtilential. How is it that the ocean is preſerved from corruption, ſo that it is a fit and pleaſant abode for the innumerable creatures, which live and play in it; and its very vapours are not only harmleſs, but even ſalutary to men, who ſail on its boſom or live on its ſhores? This is effected in the wiſe providence of God by the immenſe body of ſalt, by which the waters are impregnated, and that continual motion, in which they are preſerved by wind and tide.

With

With reſpect to living creatures, the ocean is doubtleſs in a great meaſure a world unknown to us. We are ignorant of the treaſures and of the inhabitants, which lie hid in its dark and unfathomable caverns; but, judging the unſearchable parts of the ocean by thoſe, which we can penetrate and examine, or judging of the waters by the land, we may believe every part well inhabited. It is ſaid that every portion of air, every handful of earth, and every drop of water, is animated with living creatures, chiefly too ſmall to be diſcovered by the naked eye. It is generally obſervable alſo in the watry world that in proportion to the body of waters, collected together in pond or lake, ſea or ocean, is the ſize of creatures found in them. What vaſt and wonderful creatures, therefore, is it ſuppoſeable from analogy muſt inhabit the deep places of thoſe largeſt oceans on the globe, which have as yet been but a little explored by the adventurous mariner!

Without entering the field of conjecture, enough has been diſcovered of the inhabitants of the deep to claim our grateful wonder and praiſe to their great Creator. The variety of kinds and of ſpecies is almoſt infinite; large and ſmall; ſome to devour, and others to be their victims; ſome excellent for their ſtrength, others for their beauty, and others for their uſefulneſs and comfort to man. *There is that leviathan, whom God hath made to play therein.** *He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the ſea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to ſhine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.* Thus he is deſcribed in Job.†

To paſs by other ſurpriſing works of God in the deep, aſtoniſhing is that inexhauſtible ſupply of fiſh, with

* Pſalm civ. 26. † xli. 31, 32.

which ſeveral thouſands of enterpriſing men are annually employed in taking only on the banks of Newfoundland, without appearing in the leaſt to diminiſh their quantity in the courſe of a century. How worthy alſo of grateful notice is the circumſtance that fiſh are found on the Grand Bank, not young and old, but all in full ſize, as if kind Providence had nurtured them in other places, perhaps inacceſſible by hook and line, and had conducted them to that ſpot, as a convenient place of delivery to his dependent creature man. Who can fail to obſerve the merciful goodneſs of God, who has cauſed thoſe fiſh, and thoſe animals and birds, which are moſt uſeful to man, the faſteſt to multiply and the moſt to abound; while noxious creatures propagate ſlowly, and ſeldom appear to annoy us? *How manifold are thy works, Lord God Almighty! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all.*

Such are ſome of the *works* of God, of which our ſeafaring brethren are ſpectators. They alſo,

2. Experience many *wonders* of his providence.

We all indeed are dependent on the providence of God for our being, and for any comfort and ſucceſs, which we enjoy in the world. The huſbandman muſt look to God for his ſeed time and harveſt, for the former and the latter rain; and for all, which he gathers for man and beaſt. Yet the ſcene of providence appears more marked with affecting changes on the water, than on the land. A wind or ſtorm, from which we take ſafe refuge in our houſes, may bring the mariner into the jeopardy of his life. He has no place of retreat; he muſt meet the howling tempeſt, and ſubſiſt as he can amid the war of elements. Hence with what

juſt

juſt concern does he watch the ſky, and perhaps, with the Prophet of Iſrael, apprehends important change from a cloud, riſing out of the ſea, no bigger than a man's hand! How frequently are his fears realized, and he perceives the veſſel at the mercy of the winds, ſuffering no controul from thoſe on board, and haſtening to the ſhore, where is almoſt certain deſtruction! O how *many* are there in this aſſembly, who have at ſome time felt this to be their own ſituation! and did you not alſo look up and feel that God only could deliver you? Did you not *cry unto the Lord in your trouble? and he brought you out of your diſtreſſes. He made the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof were ſtill. Then were you glad, becauſe you were quiet; ſo he brought you to your deſired haven.* Then *praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.**

It is not uncommon for us to hear the mariner talking over his dangers and hair-breadth eſcapes. Surely they were ſo many occaſions of divine kindneſs and interpoſal in his behalf. At one time the wind died away, or ſhifted to another point, ſo as juſt to ſave him from a rock or ſhore. O will he aſcribe this to chance? or to Him, *who gathereth the wind in his hand?* At another time a friendly veſſel picked him up in the midſt of the ocean, floating on an oar, or expoſed in an open boat. Will he call this a lucky chance, and be grateful only to his human deliverer? or alſo to Him, whoſe watchful providence brought the deliverer timely to his relief? In regard to all theſe occaſions, O let him ſay, *I have ſeen the wonders of the Lord in the deep.*

We ſometimes hear our brethren, who draw treaſures out of the water, ſay they have been lucky and

* Context, 28, 29, 30, 31.

and made excellent fares. Let them not forget whoſe *bleſſing* it is, *which maketh rich.* Let them not aſcribe too much to their own ſkill or induſtry; though a bleſſing commonly attends the induſtrious. Let them be very cautious, leſt the Prophet's deſcription of ſome in his time ſhould be applicable to them: *They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; therefore they rejoice and are glad: therefore they ſacrifice unto their net, and burn incenſe unto their drag; becauſe by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous.**

Having conſidered ſome of thoſe *works and wonders of God in the deep*, which ſeafaring men behold and experience, I ſhall now endeavour,

II. To apply the ſubject to them ſuitably to their employment and ſituation.

This, my brethren, you will permit me to do in ſeveral diſtinct counſels or exhortations, which I think of great importance to be obſerved in your ſeafaring life. As,

1. Are the *works and wonders of God in the deep* ſo great, ſo ſurpriſing, and affecting? Then ſuffer not your minds to grow careleſs and unobſerving of them. Things, which are common and familiar, we are apt to behold only with a glance, and to think little of them. But let not this be the caſe with you. When you look upon the vaſt ocean, think how great He is, who made it; how mighty He is, who hath aſſigned to it a habitation, and fixed his bars, where *its proud waves are ſtayed.* Let what you behold lead you to think alſo of the *wiſdom*

* Hab. i. 15, 16.

wiſdom of God; it is wonderfully declared by that amazing multitude of living things, with which the waters are filled; and alſo by that divine art, with which God preſerves the water in a ſalutary ſtate, purifying it with ſalt, fanning it with his breezes, and ſwelling it with tides.

Particularly often think of and endeavour to realize *the providence of God;* that this great family in the deep are all provided for by their Maker. Of them particularly the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks—*Theſe wait all on God, that he may give them their meat in due ſeaſon.* But eſpecially bring the idea of divine providence home to yourſelves; and while you lie on the boſom of the waters, waiting and ſeeking your ſubſiſtence, look upward with a ſenſe of your dependence; acknowledge, gratefully acknowledge it. How ſtrikingly is your caſe deſcribed in that ſame excellent pſalm, to which I have juſt referred; I mean the 104th, which I recommend to your particular attention—*That thou giveſt them*, ſays David, *they gather.* How pleaſingly does this text ſhow the providence of God and human induſtry conſiſtently working together! *You* pull the treaſure out of the water; but, I may ſay, GOD brings it to your hook.

If you acknowledge the providence of God in the ſucceſs of your labor, be ſure to acknowledge it in the preſervation of your lives. The ſea is a grave always open for the mariner; thouſands have been buried in it. O forget not the kind hand, which, unſeen, hath delivered you from all your perils. *In all your ways acknowledge God, and he ſhall direct your ſteps.*

2. If you are thus thoughtful, it will be the leſs difficult

difficult for you to keep my *ſecond* counſel, which I will expreſs in words of holy ſcripture—*Stand in awe, and ſin not.** This is the grand point; and, in order to carry it, call to your aid all the ſolemn conſiderations of the preceding head. Surely, with theſe preſent to your minds, you will *ſtand in awe*; and, ſtanding in awe, you will not dare *to ſin*. Cultivate, therefore, an habitual ſenſe of the Almighty Maker of ſea and land; of his dreadful power, his unerring wiſdom, his perfect goodneſs, of his omnipreſence. Remember the words of the Pſalmiſt, *If I dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.*† If you are tempted to ſin, conſider you have no refuge from the dangers around you, but in God; and will you forfeit this? You have but one effectual Helper; and will you provoke him againſt you?

As againſt all ſin, ſo particularly againſt the ſin of profaneneſs, let me ſolemnly caution you. I would not wiſh to conceal my reaſon for being in this reſpect particular; it is, that ſeafaring men are ſaid moſt frequently to fall into this ſin. While I aſſign this, as the reaſon, I add that I do not bring it as a charge applicable to all in this way of life. I rejoice in believing, and even in being informed, that many of you are free from this dreadful impiety. With all thoſe, whoſe conſciences convict them of this ſin, let me earneſtly expoſtulate. O do not this ſin againſt your own ſouls. This impiety is peculiarly offenſive to God. It is a crime directly againſt himſelf; and he declares that *he will not hold him guiltleſs, who taketh his name in vain.* Will you attempt to excuſe yourſelves with ſaying you mean no harm by profaneneſs; that you fall into it through *careleſsneſs?* This is what offends your

* Pſalm iv. 4. † Pſalm cxxxix. 9, 10.

your Maker, that you can be careleſs in regard to *him;* that you can trifle and ſport with his dread name. Think you that the third commandment intends only *malicious blaſphemies? I will not hold him guiltleſs*, ſaith God, *who taketh my name* IN VAIN. This expreſſion marks the very ſin, which you ſo freely commit. Let me entreat all, who are thus guilty, to think juſtly of the horrid impiety, and to repent and offend no more. In that ſtorm, to which the prophet Jonah was expoſed, every mariner *cried to his God* for deliverance. This ſhould be and I truſt is the caſe with you, when in like diſtreſs and danger. But can you, with hope and confidence, open that mouth in prayer, which has been commonly employed in venting blaſphemies? When the ſky is ſerene and the ocean calm, O bar not that door by your profaneneſs, which you wiſh may be open to your prayers in a tempeſt.

3. Let the conſtant view, which you have of the *works* and *wonders* of God in the deep, render you *devout*. Think it not enough, my brethren, that you lay ſo much reſtraint on the tongue, as not groſsly to violate the third commandment. It is mentioned in holy ſcripture as a great ſin to *forget God*, as it is inculcated alſo as a great duty to *remember our Creator*. By being *devout* I mean that you have a temper of mind habitually ſerious and pious; and that every day you *offer unto God thankſgiving and prayer*. Let every day open and ſhut with a humble addreſs to your Maker. If this you do with a ſincere mind, with what hope and confidence will you be able to flee to him as your friend in the hour of tempeſt, danger, and death!

4. Let me exhort you not to forget your paſt experience of danger and deliverance. Theſe very many

many of you have experienced, ſome ſeveral times, and many of you on your late return from ſea. *Then*, with ſome of you, your hope was *as the giving up of the ghoſt*. You were weary, diſheartened, exhauſted, deſpairing: then, when *you* could do no more, GOD brought you ſalvation. And will you forget it? *You* received *diſtinguiſhing* mercy—— Alas! *your brethren, where are they?* Not one ſad meſſenger arrives to tell.*——May the impreſſion of that ſcene attend you now to ſea, and, through the grace of God, have the moſt ſalutary effect upon your hearts and converſation. Jonah was in danger and was delivered; what was his reſolution? *I will ſacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed; ſalvation is of the Lord.*† O may you go and do likewiſe.

5. You are about to take leave of your families; then prayerfully leave them with God; and, while abſent, commend them every day to his mercy and care. This you can do, and this is all, that you can immediately do for them. Your wives muſt loſe the ſolace of your converſation, and your children the benefit of your counſels, for a ſeaſon; but your prayers, if fervent, may avail them much. Much alſo may they avail yourſelves. Bearing your families

* A dozen ſchooners, returning to this town about the middle of November with their fare, juſt before their arrival were ſtruck by a violent ſtorm. Several of them were in extreme danger; and one, commanded by THOMAS WALES, was ſpoken with near Cape Sables, and has not been heard of ſince the ſtorm. Little hope remains but that ſeveral families are bereaved of a huſband and father, and the community of ſeven men and two boys. The perſons on board were, *Thomas Wales*, ſkipper, *George Groce*, *William Haſkel*, *Nathaniel Webber*, *Aſa Adams*, *Benjamin Woodberry*, *Henry Woodberry*, *Stephen Jones*, and *Benjamin Sumner*.

† Jonah ii. 9.

families habitually on your hearts before God, humbly ſubmitting them both to his care and his diſpoſal, you will be well prepared to meet them again, whether they have been viſited in your abſence by the ſmiles or ſtrokes of his providence. What changes may occur God only knows. The experience of ſome of you in the paſt ſeaſon was truly affecting.

6. While diligent in your occupation, ſeeking treaſures hidden in the ſea, remember there is a dearer treaſure, which you ought to be ever ſeeking. O neglect it not; and, while you perceive your dependence on the *providence* of God to ſecure your temporal ſubſiſtence, for this infinitely more precious treaſure, this *meat, which endureth to eternal life*, feel and acknowledge your dependence on the *grace* of God. Becauſe removed from our worſhipping aſſemblies, and from ſome of our excellent means of grace, O do not for a moment think that you may be remiſs in religion. Rather double your diligence to improve the means, which you ſtill may have. You will by no means neglect to carry with you what the brave and the pious Admiral NELSON calls his cabin companion, *a bible*. With this be familiar; conſult it conſtantly as your guide, and repair to it as your ſolace from fatigue, and your ſupport in danger.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Though your ears may not be ſaluted with the pleaſing, ſolemn ſound of the church bell, calling you to public worſhip; yet do not forget that this bleſſed day is equally holy on the ſea and on the land. You need not deny yourſelves the pleaſure of *ſocial worſhip*. It is indeed your *duty;* and remember you may obtain the promiſe—*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.*

*them.** Should any of you be tempted to employ holy time in ſecular buſineſs, I recommend to him a ſtriking paſſage in the hiſtory of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs. While they lived on manna, if they gathered in any day more, than was conſumed that day, it corrupted and bred worms; except what they gathered on the ſixth day for the Sabbath, which remained ſweet and good. This may ſhow you that God by his bleſſing will ſupply that, which might ſeem to be loſt by ſuſpending labor on his day. Bring this thought home to yourſelves, and be perſuaded that no man is the richer by any unneceſſary labor in holy time. All, that a man might ſeem to collect on this day, will be like that ſurplus of manna, gathered by ſome covetous Iſraelites, which bred worms. Ever remember that the bleſſing of God on *ſecular* buſineſs is worth more, than one day's labor in ſeven; without it, the other ſix days are ſpent in vain. I urge the obſervation of the Sabbath by more ſolemn and awful conſiderations alſo; by the authority of God in the fourth commandment, and by the fitneſs of this, as a mean, to break exceſſive worldly mindedneſs, and to fix attention on thoſe great goſpel realities, of which men grow unmindful, while engaged in worldly buſineſs. *Turn away thy foot from the Sabbath* therefore, *from doing thy pleaſure on God's holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable.**

Finally; let me exhort you to cultivate affection among you. Each veſſel is a dwelling, and the company on board a family, a family of brothers. I hope you will not need the caution, which wiſe Joſeph gave to his brethren—*See that you fall not out by the way.*† Let *the law of kindneſs be in your tongue;*

* Matt. xviii. 20. † Iſa. lviii. 13.

tongue; it will ſweeten your toil. By a modeſt and affectionate converſation, endeavour to ſupply the want of thoſe domeſtic endearments, which at home you enjoy in your families. Eſpecially be gentle monitors to one another in things of eternal moment. Steadily diſcountenance *profaneneſs*, and reprove *intemperance. Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.** May the Lord enable you to anſwer in character and final happineſs to thoſe, deſcribed in the cloſe of the Old Teſtament†—*Then they, that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name: And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in that day, when I make up my jewels; and I will ſpare them, as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him. Then ſhall ye return, and diſcern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.*

Beloved, I wiſh above all things that you may proſper and be in health; and eſpecially that your ſouls may proſper. Brethren, I commend you to the providence of God, and *to the word of his grace, which are able to preſerve you and to build you up.*

* Heb. iii. 13. † Malachi iii. 16, 17, 18.